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## **Text Travel in the Global Age:**

**Anthony Pym (2004): *The Moving Text – Localisation, Translation, and Distribution*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing;**

**Bert Esselink (2000): *A Practical Guide to Localisation*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company;**

**Bert Esselink (2003): Localisation and translation. In Harold Somers (ed.) *Computers and Translation. A Translator's Guide*. Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.**

### **Abstract**

This paper aims at presenting, discussing and putting into perspective some of the essentials of localisation as these have been defined and explicated by Anthony Pym and Bert Esselink.

### **1. Introduction**

The basic subject dealt with by the abovementioned two books and the book chapter is localisation. Localisation can be defined in various ways. A random look-up on the internet produces a variety of similar definitions, which to a large extent could be used in connection with translation or intercultural text production in general. Throughout this paper, the definition and positioning of the word localisation in relation to especially translation studies will be dealt with repeatedly, so for the sake of introduction, localisation will here be defined as,

The inverse and companion of globalization - how to be international while still accommodating and adapting to local market needs (Mason 2001: 1).

This is a broad definition, but it has been chosen as an introductory definition here, because several aspects of localisation will be defined and explicated

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later on, but they will still fall under the umbrella definition above. Obviously, accommodating and adapting to local market needs would take more than language; it would take elements like project management, marketing and technical adaptation into account, too. Precisely that is what localisation is all about: One element alone does not do the trick. The combination of factors creates the concept of localisation.

Derivatives of the word localisation will be used, too, but they will be exemplified and defined currently.

With the two books dealing with localisation by Pym (2004) and Esselink (2000) and the book chapter by Esselink (2003), the concept of localisation is defined, exemplified and explicated in depth: a much needed combination of academic and industrial uses of the concept and its underlying methods. Pym's contribution to the present standing of localisation is the academic approach, first and foremost in relation to translation studies, but also in relation to the digital world, the simultaneity of text transfer in the third millennium and to the balance between a globalised world and different markets; in this connection also called locales. Esselink's contribution on the other hand is of a practical nature with hands-on experience with among other things digital programs, documentation requirements in globalisation, internationalisation and localisation, as well as translation technology, all combined in a book on the different tools and aids in localisation, supplemented by the subsequent and updated book chapter.

Pym's background is solidly anchored in the academic world. He is at present employed at the Universitat Rovira i Virgili, Tarragona in Spain. He has written a dozen books, a dozen squared articles and reviews, most of them in relation to translation, cultural issues in general and localisation in particular, and with his continued work at university level and as a key person at different workshops, conferences and postgraduate courses, Pym plays a major role on the translation and localisation scene today. Esselink's position is different. His background with training as a technical writer, with knowledge in computational linguistics and with almost two decades of experience in multilingual projects provides him with important ballast. He is now employed at the global company Lionbridge Technologies. Moreover, Esselink participates in both industrial and academic work on localisation. His book is also widely used both in industry and as a text book in localisation classes.

The two books by Pym and Esselink, respectively, are important contributions to the field of localisation, as they function as two major pieces in a localisation puzzle. Pym alone does not provide the insight needed to work with localisation and the feel for localisation in practice, but does provide some questions and answers to why in essence translation and localisation are not synonyms. Esselink alone does not put localisation into a theoretical perspective. He focuses

on software localisation, although he says that it has been omitted from the title of this revised edition of the book. Esselink, however, provides an answer to the importance of the development of translation technology and the translation tools pertaining to it, and in turn the changes in the work environment of translators and localizers worldwide.

Judging from the availability of books on localisation in general over the past ten years, nobody would think that this was a high-growth area. However, localisation has gained ground over the past ten to fifteen years. Localisation as a budding concept is far older in the inner circles of the localisation industry, with Microsoft as the hard core of the trend. The early definitions and descriptions of the sprouts of localisation were therefore scattered in diverse articles in different media, often with vague definitions of the concept, and often very closely linked to software development.

The actors of localisation were often found in technical environments, but today the term localisation has spread to encompass actors with different educational backgrounds from universities, companies and associations. Some of the proponents were – and are still today – the magazine *Localization Focus* from the Localisation Research Centre at the University of Limerick with Reinhard Schäler as the anchorman. Another anchorperson solidly based in the academic world is Anthony Pym. Not to forget the entire localisation industry, where many could be mentioned, and here for instance Lionbridge, among other things because this is the company where Bert Esselink is employed. The congregation point of these different interests in localisation is LISA: the Localization Industry Standards Association, and on LISA's website [www.lisa.org](http://www.lisa.org), a multitude of contacts within the area of localisation can be found.

## 2. From locality to locale

The term localisation is clearly connected with the term locality, originating from marketing studies and discussed widely by culture theoreticians, such as Appadurai and Hannerz, and economists, such as for instance Giddens.

The term locality is generally used to delimit and describe the characteristics and needs of a market or a certain geographical or ethnographic group. The term is a spin-off of globalisation, and definitions of a locality pinpoint differences and similarities between groups of people. Thus,

Influences from globalisation processes become part of the “production of localities”<sup>1</sup> although globalizing processes may mean that the

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<sup>1</sup> Quotation marks specify that the concept was taken from Appadurai, Arjun (1995): *The Production of Locality*, in Richard Fardon, ed., *Counterworks*, London: Routledge.

conception of what is 'inside' becomes increasingly abstract – for example to include a number of localities which constitute the imagined community of the nation-state or even groups of nation-states (such as the EU). (Kjeldgaard 2004: 60)

One of the apparent needs of a locality is naturally the description and marketing of the products in the language in question for that locality. This need is typically expressed as purchasing choice. The response to not fulfilling the needs of a locality is lack of attention whereas the response to fulfilling the needs of a locality is possible attention. The request for localisation for a consumer market is normally not segment-dependent<sup>2</sup>. The requests and needs from a locality in terms of language and technical adaptations created the term locale, which means the language or language variation or dialect of the locality in question combined with possible technical adjustments, or in other words: in what language will the marketer address the locale to market the product. The word locale also takes into account that for instance English can be divided into different locales. Anyone who has ever tried to use the spell-checker is confronted with for instance the choice between 18 locales of English.

### **2.1. The beginning and end of a language and a locale**

A dividing line between two languages or a language and a dialect does not exist, for which reason the distinction between locale A (language variation A) and locale B (language variation B) is sometimes arbitrary, based on either power structures in a region, sense of belonging or other factors. Pym simply puts it this way,

Those who travel on foot or have read the diachronic part of Saussure know that there are no natural borders between languages. (Pym 2004: 21)

The question then arises how locales are defined by an industry striving to access a market. Pym also suggests how this question can be addressed,

The concept of "locale" thus becomes fundamentally empirical: locales do not exist until they show themselves by resisting some process of distribution. (Pym 2004: 22)

In the quotation above, two aspects of marketing are covered. The first aspect being that if a company or industry can access a market without too high resistance from the buyers, the industry will go ahead without further ado. The delimitation and realization of a locale will then in the end boil down to some

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<sup>2</sup> Segment in this context refers to segments of a market, as it is conventionally used in marketing studies; segment occurs later in the paper in connection with Pym's book, in which he uses segment differently

financial break-even equation with profit potential on one side of the equation and localisation costs on the other side of the equation. The second aspect being that of distribution. At first sight, it seemed intriguing that Pym so often and so strongly emphasizes distribution as a factor in translation/localisation. A closer scrutiny of the word revealed why it seemed odd in the first place. Two decades ago, the meaning of the word distribution simply indicated the channels through which a product travels.

**Distribution** (2) COM. The arrangements and activities needed for getting goods from the manufacturer or importer to the consumer through the channels of distribution which are usually the wholesalers and retailers [...] (Adam 1989: 182)

More recent dictionaries and books basically stick to the same line of definition, which is very closely linked to the channels of the product travel itself. These dictionaries definitely need an updated definition of the word, which will be clarified in the following.

When Pym uses the word distribution, it can be understood in both a broader and a narrower sense than pushing a product towards different markets: the broader sense being that distribution covers not a specific supply channel from producer to consumer but all the channels from a global source to all the requested localities worldwide, the narrower sense being that very often the product has to be available to the buyers worldwide on the very same day. In this sense, distribution suddenly incorporates the notions of time limitation and simultaneous actions.

## **2.2. Time limitation and simultaneous actions**

Now, the industry has realized the implications of time limitation and simultaneous actions long ago, but in many other aspects than in translation relations these notions are covered by such concepts as lead time, just-in-time management, supply management, supply chain management, logistics et cetera. These concepts were brought to light by a search in different books on marketing and organizational behaviour, where a search in the indexes for the word distribution produced references to pages on which the topics dealt with some of the examples given above. Add to that the myriad of compound words in the indexes starting with distribution.

## **3. Localisation and process management**

The octopus range of concepts used today to cover distribution is thus not fortuitous; it reveals that the time aspect combined with distribution has been given high priority by trade and industry in general. The attention given to the issue by means of discrete management theories and practices may suggest that this

area is troublesome. Most management and organizational theories, however, basically deal with the marketing of the product itself, and not enough attention is paid to the accompanying documentation. The multilingual documentation process is exactly the part of marketing which has lent the name localisation to the field. Examples and case studies from the industry amply illustrate some of the successes and even more so: the failures. In the following, one example of a successful localisation process in the form of multilingual documentation is given and subsequently one example of a less successful localisation process in the form of a localised TV version.

### **3.1. The Eastman Kodak localisation process**

A successful example is Eastman Kodak, one of the premier global marketers who in 1999 was faced with the request for,

Targeted, simultaneous availability of the product in all languages.  
(Topping 2000: 111)

To be able to fulfil that goal, Eastman Kodak had to implement in-house localisation processes and an analysis hereof to find strengths and weaknesses. The results of the analysis were among others the following,

Translation of product literature and software is, by definition, in the critical path for shipment of these products: no translation, no product. Marketing staff, not familiar with translation and localisation complexities, saw the typical timetable for language work and asked, predictably, “Why does localisation take so long?” (Topping 2000: 111)

First and foremost, the acknowledgement is evident that translation is needed to market a product. It can hardly be expressed stronger than “no translation, no product”. Why is that? In a world with so many English-speaking people, why not just sell the product with English documentation? The answer is just as obvious: in the case of a technically advanced product, the buyer picks out the product on the shelf with the right language version in the packet, for which reason the localised products have a competitive edge.

Secondly, many marketing people are just not used to having to take into consideration that time must be allowed for translation and adaptation activities at all, for which reason any time spent on language work and processes involved are considered to be far too long-winded. The example from Eastman Kodak revealed this after an analysis of the different processes,

In reality, translation and localization itself actually took only a very small fraction of the total time [...] (Topping 2000: 117)

The analysis proved that the greatest savings in time and effort could be found by rationalising development and testing of the product since only few days were

actually spent on localisation and translation, compared to the time schedules for the other factors in the process.

A closer scrutiny of the manufacturing and marketing processes with a view to time-saving showed that the processes most in need of rationalisation and restructuring were the front-end activities, which were defined as the pre-translation and localisation activities, typically in the form of simplification of building processes, documentation set-up activities and file preparation, and the back-end activities, defined as the post-translation activities, typically in the form of testing and quality analysis.

A happy ending to the Eastman Kodak story materialised by the integration of language and localisation processes in the total process management plan, and the success was evident through the launching of all foreign-language versions concurrently with the English version.

### **3.2. The Compuflex localisation process**

The flip side of the coin shows another image that is also true of localisation. In his book *Translation and Globalisation*, Michael Cronin (2003) mentions an example from the TV industry where localisation went wrong,

Compuflex also decided to localize the shows for different markets and it was the Irish branch which was responsible for coordinating the localisation of the material. The experience was not a happy one. (Cronin 2003: 18)

Cronin states two reasons. Firstly, the wrong assumptions of how quickly technology would be global, and in turn how quickly the role of the consumer or user would change. Secondly, the US headquarters wanted to localize at the lowest cost possible so they followed the model for localisation of office software.

The result was not very successful. The belief that the TV program could be localized easily and from central quarters led to a rejection on the part of the national producers because they felt the programs were patronizing and too American.

## **4. Localisation jobs**

As illustrated in the two examples above, important factors in project and process management are simultaneity and short lead times with tight deadlines. The request from companies that a product and all services pertaining to it must be marketed at the same time in all the selected countries is an enormous logistical task in terms of simultaneity at all stages in the marketing efforts, including also the translation services accompanying the products. Translation studies have conveniently more or less disregarded these aspects so far. Pym

labels the problem distribution and Esselink labels the solution automation and translation tools.

#### 4.1. Pym in essence

A wider discussion of what the processes of localisation really encompass forms the crux of Pym's book, in which he discusses all sorts of questions in translation studies and localisation theory. He starts out by saying that the draft for the book was made by taking his previous book *Translation and Text Transfer* from 1992 and replacing all occurrences of translation with localisation. The changes that had to be made for that experiment to make sense were extensive, and the questions he asks in *The Moving Text* are for instance,

Is there anything really new that translation practice and theory can learn from localisation? Can localisation theory in turn learn anything from the history or complexity of translation? (Pym 2004: xv)

Throughout the book, these relations are illustrated and discussed back and forth and seen from different angles, which makes the book valuable in its own right. Pym also sets out to investigate other questions, such as,

Is globalisation the only wider process within which localisation makes sense? (Pym 2004: xv)

His own answer to this question must be a no, and his argument runs that the reason is material distribution, which is one of the new subjects in his book, and one of the subjects that has been presented and exemplified earlier. It is not quite convincing, however, how he links material distribution to the concepts of globalisation and localisation. Maybe he opts for an open solution which the chapter called *Asymmetries of Localization* might suggest.

#### 4.2. Organisation of Pym's book

The contents of Pym's book that addresses localisation, translation, and distribution under the common heading *The Moving Text* are organised in nine chapters. The table of contents is extraordinary as it has a two-three line summary of each subchapter under the actual headline, which is useful for a reader who wants to go back and find where a certain phenomenon was described.

#### 4.3. Chapter overview

The first chapter *Distribution* deals with distribution as the overall topic, seen in relation to the market. This forms the background for the explanation of software localisation with examples of distribution and typical problems in relation to localisation that are not seen in conventional translation and that are not always visible to the translator at the time of translation.

Moreover, other types of texts and genres are included to illustrate the complexity of localisation of text. What for instance does a newspaper tender for construction have to do with localisation? This question is used as a vantage point for how a locale is defined and where it ends and what is translated in localisation, also in a historical perspective. The chapter is a good appetizer to many of the complexities of localisation.

Chapter two *Asymmetries of distribution* deals with a much more detailed account of the phenomenon of localisation as it is related, not to the market, but to the distribution process through globalisation, internationalisation, localisation and translation. Some of the existing models of localisation are questioned. The argument runs that a localised text may be localised to a certain extent only, meaning that not all localised texts are localised all the way through, and that one of the decisive factors is the size of the market. All the English-language versions of the Microsoft Office programs, for instance, are possible because the basic English version only needs little adaptation for it to be called British-English versus Australian-English. This example compares with other countries and locales where a complete localisation process is requested, and where the locale population is higher than that of for instance Australia. The dilemma is that the size of a locale is not a guarantee for localisation of a product. That and other examples come under the umbrella that Pym labels asymmetries of localisation, which in its own right is worth a further study.

Chapters three, four and five: *Equivalence, malgré tout, How translations speak*, and *Quantity speaks*, respectively, are theoretical chapters where localisation is seen in a translational perspective. Especially chapters three and four provide much food for thought. Pym draws parallels between translation theory and localisation theory by reverting to equivalence, one of the essentials of translation theory. Actually, localisation would very much prefer equivalence to be the order of the day, because that would be easier, and in turn cheaper. Nevertheless, that is not the basic idea of localisation, which is the idea of adaptation, so the whole dilemma of translation in localisation is discussed here.

The visibility and neutrality of translators are questioned. Is it possible to be invisible or neutral at all? Another question which Pym challenges is the basic assumption that texts are monolingual by nature. This problem is central to localisation and might have deserved its own chapter in the book. All practicing translators and marketers constantly face the problems of keeping the balance in culture between the 'comfortable known' and the 'inspiring new'. Examples are given, for instance, of how a translator can cope with for example a foreignizing effect in a text, especially when the foreignizing effect is taken from the language that the text is eventually translated into?

Chapter five *Quantity speaks* functions as a bridge between classical translation methods and subjects that are more related to localisation. Pym presents some of the methods of localisation, i.e. extension of the text, abbreviation, addition and deletion: the essential methods of translation in localisation. Moreover, he discusses one of the traditional extension methods in translation: translator's footnotes. His main grudge against footnotes is that they very often tend to underestimate the intellect of the reader. Abbreviation, on the same counts, is rarely possible because a translated text normally requires more explanation, not less. The main difference between extension and abbreviation on the one hand, and deletion and addition on the other hand is that deletion and addition would normally require the approval of an outside authority to the translation, for which reason it is troublesome in speedy text translation.

Chapter six *Belonging as resistance* discusses some of the difficulties between the source text and the receiving locale. The crux of this chapter is distribution versus non-distribution, and how the logic of localisation opposes non-distribution. Non-distribution forces in the source text consist of many embedded linguistic and cultural ties whereas a text to be easily localized calls for vagueness and loose referents of the text. The opposite of an internationalized text, as Pym argues, are the pure natural languages, because they reinforce relations of belonging in the source culture. For this reason, the structure of the natural language itself often embeds hidden cultural connotations. This can of worms is not completely open to localizers in the industry in general, because common-core cultural texts are often stronger in cultural embeddedness than are specialized texts, because specialized texts often develop their own registers, which are universal to a higher extent.

Chapter seven *Transaction costs* begins with a discussion of the importance of neo-classical theories and their influence on globalisation and localisation. The chapter narrows down to cover the aspects of transaction costs, which are to be understood as time, effort and money spent. Naturally, as Pym points out, transaction costs will always be a trade-off between internationalisation costs, translation costs, and the costs and benefits balanced between the vendor and the localized market. This issue is quite complicated, but also a highly practical issue and central to the intricacies of localisation, and it strikes a chord much more nuanced than the usual talk about cross-cultural differences and translation strategies.

Chapter eight *Professionalization* deals with translation and segmentation. Segmentation here is not to be understood in marketing terms, but in terms of defining the frontiers between different professional groups in the localisation process. Pym argues that the dividing force of the segments is technology. In practice this means that to the extent the vendor sees an advantage in splitting up texts in bits for different segments, the vendor does so, and recombines the bits

afterwards. The repercussions are that what was the primary pride for translators, that of translation as an entity in relation to the context and to the target language market is trodden under foot. Pym's solution to this problem is the control of the mediating professions or the development of shared professional identity in order to build a bridge over the gap. Opening this topic for discussion will definitely be a poke in the eye of many ardent supporters of narrowly defined professions and a delight for cross-professional advocates.

Chapter nine *Humanizing discourse* continues this stream of thought. Along the way, discussions are included of linearity in text versus hyper-based text and of how and when the dehumanizing of translation takes place, and in addition, the possible dehumanizing of the user.

Anthony Pym's book is interesting and intriguing because it addresses many of the questions that translation theory shuns, for instance that projects are multilingual, and that costs and deadlines are factors of utmost importance. Factors that ultimately challenge the status and the role of the translator in a global world where automation is the order of the day. And this is where Esselink's book contributes with data.

#### **4.4. Esselink in essence**

Esselink's book *A Practical Guide to Localisation* focuses on the much more technological and pragmatic aspects of localisation, which is already evident in the Preface to the book,

The web has taken over the world and new, web-based localisation providers are challenging the larger, established localisation vendors by offering advanced translation workflow automation solutions. (Esselink 2000: preface)

In the preface, one of the greatest changes in written, or one might say visual, communication is identified. Focus is very often on the text and what happens to the text, but the medium as such is equally important. The screen carries the communication at the advent of the third millennium. In practice, Esselink has realized this by making his book hyper-connected. Later in the preface he writes,

Because information on localisation becomes outdated very quickly, some sections from the book have been moved to the web. At [www.locguide.com](http://www.locguide.com) you will find many links to useful online resources related to localisation and translation. The web site also contains updates to the book, exercises, and some sample files. (Esselink 2000: preface)

Such a web site would seem to be a gift. It is some kind of guarantee that the book would not be outdated too quickly. However, a practical example of the

velocity of change today materializes when the hyperlink stated in the preface is entered to access the Internet. The web site has apparently been moved or removed, and Google can no longer find it via some of the logical entries. A disappointment for a reader or user of the book. Alas, one of the blessings of the new digital world. A pleasure, though, for the reader or user would in turn be to read Esselink's book chapter from 2003 in which some of the new trends in the industry are included. The book chapter provides some of the information that could be expected from the hyperlink update.

Three things are important in the description of localisation as explained in the preface of Esselink (2000). First and foremost, that automation solutions are now widespread and translation tools abound. Secondly, that the attitude to the use of web sites have changed from a luxury to a necessity, and thirdly that the trend so often predicted from many quarters that English will take over the web is contradicted. Three markers that all, individually and combined, are indicators of the changes that might be enhanced in future.

A comparison of the three trends analyzed by Esselink with the statement from Topping that 'no translation, no product' shows that the statements are congruent in their opinion on translation as a critical factor in connection with the marketing and sales of a product.

Esselink also notes in the preface that the word 'software', which appeared in the first version of the book title, has been removed from the present version title, because localisation has now spread to,

A variety of topics useful to people localizing and translating material in other areas, such as web sites or "traditional" documentation. (Esselink 2000: preface)

This piece of information goes well hand in hand with the mainstream attitude to localisation and the spreading of the word localisation in relation to translation practice and translation studies.

#### **4.5. Organisation of Esselink's book**

Esselink's book from 2000 has been divided into 14 chapters and two appendices. Each chapter is organised into an introductory paragraph, a section overview, the actual sections and references. To explain concepts and phenomena, Esselink himself often turns to LISA<sup>3</sup> for definitions.

#### **4.6. Chapter overview**

In the first chapter of this book *Introduction*, Esselink writes that different definitions exist for the term "localisation". His own definition runs,

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<sup>3</sup> Localisation Industry Standards Association

Generally speaking, localisation is the translation and adaptation of a software or web product, which includes the software application itself and all related product documentation. The term “localisation” is derived from the term “locale”, which traditionally means a small area or vicinity. (Esselink, 2000: 1)

On the face of it, his definition of the word localisation is very close to many definitions of the word. However, the specification of what it includes is very often missing from other definitions of the word localisation. First of all, the definition includes software application, the web and related product documentation. Now, this very same phenomenon was recently described by Reinhard Schäler<sup>4</sup> from the Localisation Research Centre who said that localisation was something that was ‘digital’, which is maybe more apt as a description. Also, Esselink did remove software from the title of the book, but not from the definition.

Many people would understand localisation in a broader sense today. Localisation may be used for a product, which is basically mechanical, but the documentation pertaining to it is typically made in a Word program, or another text-based program. In modern uses of localisation, especially when the topic is translation and localisation, digital is not even part of the definition. When the localisation industry frequently emphasizes ‘software’ and ‘digital’ the reason is probably the reuse of text in updated versions of machinery and programs.

Another rare definition by Esselink is that of a locale, which follows right after the excerpt above,

Today, locale is mostly used in a technical context, where it represents a specific combination of language, region, and character encoding. For example, the French spoken in Canada is a different locale to the French spoken in France. (Esselink 2000: 1)

A comparison of Esselink’s and Pym’s handling of the word locale reveals the technical character of Esselink’s definition, i.e. language, region, character encoding, versus the character of Pym’s definition of the term, where he emphasizes the resistance that it takes for a new locale to be accepted by the vendor. In other words, applied on Esselink’s example with France and Canada, the French language would differ too much in the French-French and Canadian-French versions to be one language version only. The Canadians would view it as French, not Canadian, and vice versa, and thus sales would be higher with two localized versions.

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<sup>4</sup> In a presentation at the IPCC conference in Limerick on 10th July, 2005.

According to Pym's definition, a locale would materialize for two reasons, one being resistance to non-translation and the other low localisation costs. Comparing the two definitions clearly reveal the different approaches to a locale: Pym's cultural/financial approach and Esselink's technically based approach.

In chapter one of Esselink, *Introduction*, a comparison of translation and localisation is very pragmatic and looks as follows,

Translation		Localisation	
Language transfer Terminology research Editing Proofreading Page layout	Translation after source document finalisation	Language transfer Terminology research Editing Proofreading Page layout Multilingual project management Software and online help engineering and testing Conversion of translated documentation to other formats Translation memory alignment and management Multilingual product support Translation strategy consulting	Localisation parallel with development of source product

Fig. 1: Comparison of translation and localisation based on Esselink (2000).

Esselink (2003) further refines this model with four theoretical points where localisation differs from translation. These points are activities, complexity, adaptation level and technology used (Esselink 2003: 69). Important in this context is that he accounts for the more recent developments in the digital world: marketing of scale on the internet. The impact of more marketing-related texts taking up increasing space on the internet also means an increased demand on adaptation. In this connection, Esselink introduces one of the new millennium concepts: transcreation,

Apart from technical adaptations to software code, often complete re-writes (sometimes called "transcreations") of sample files or marketing material need to be done before the content is acceptable for a certain target locale. (Esselink 2003: 70)

New in this perspective is also that the updating of the marketing texts takes place on a daily basis which has created the need for web-based tools that are accessible to a broad user group in contrast to some of the TM/CAT<sup>5</sup> tools which for price

<sup>5</sup> MT/CAT: machine translation/computer-aided tools

and complexity reasons are reserved for companies with a certain volume and clout. The outcome of this need for a daily update might be, as Esselink (2003) suggests, the return of translation to companies and free-lancers.

A comparison of Pym and Esselink (2000) shows that the similarities in their views on localisation cover aspects such as parallelism of text travel in localisation, the strong emphasis on project and process management and the presence and importance of translation tools. Those features are not present or only of minute importance in translation studies. What still remains to be explained convincingly in positive or negative terms in both books is the answer to the following question: Is translation merely a subset of localisation?

The rest of chapter one *Introduction* deals with the different roles of people in the localisation industry, the division of a localisation project in tasks that have to be performed and who does them. Also, a typical project flow from beginning to end is delineated.

Chapter two *Internationalization* deals with several aspects of internationalization, the purpose of which Esselink explains as follows,

Publishers can influence the success of their localisation and globalisation effort to a large extent by preparing their products for foreign markets during the development phase, in other words, by internationalizing them properly. (Esselink 2000: 25)

According to Esselink, the purpose of including this work phase instead of just jumping to localisation immediately is twofold, that of ensuring functionality and that of making the project localizable. Most of the chapter functions as a reference list of things a writer has to take into account when preparing a text for localisation. In the course of the chapter, however, some interesting aspects are dealt with, for instance the need for controlled writing, the lack of a common standard or even common name for the phenomenon of controlled writing. As regards the actual software localisation, the essentials are explained and listed, for instance that data blocs and code blocs must be completely separated. Also, Esselink refers to the locale model, which he explains as a collection of standard settings, rules and data that are specific to a language and geographical region. This is one of the places where Esselink's knowledge emanates through the text when he explains useful tools in both data bloc and code bloc development. The chapter also includes a description of some of the tools used in internationalisation. It elaborates on CAT<sup>6</sup> tools and much space is allocated to simultaneous website maintenance, but once again from a very technical point of view.

Chapter three *Software Translation* obviously deals with software translation, which many translators try to avoid, basically because it presupposes ex-

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<sup>6</sup> CAT = computer-aided-translation

pert knowledge and sometimes specialized programs. It is most often without context, and the translation options are available in a database (would you then need a translator?) However, very often software translation is accompanied by descriptions and instructions, which need to be translated and localized, too, so even here, the expertise of the translator is called for.

Chapter four *Software Engineering* is most relevant for technicians, but some of the information in the chapter is universal, for instance that software engineering clearly belongs in the ‘Internationalisation’ part of the process,

It is important, when working with software products, to do a full and thorough evaluation and preparation of the source materials. The consequences of not checking can be quite significant, for example, if files that contain errors are sent out for translation into 14 languages, any errors originating in the source files will need to be fixed 14 times. (Esselink 2004: 99)

Again, this statement is very much in line with Topping’s research that much of the rationalisation could be effectuated in the pre-translation process. Other examples of what is included in this stage are identification of translatable text, reuse of existing text or terminology, picking the agents involved in the translation process etc. Moreover, the tools used are presented and in general this chapter is one long checklist of how to do various aspects in connection with localisation of especially computer programs.

Chapter five *Software Quality Assurance* deals with testing. Testing at diverse stages in the process: internationalisation and localisation, testing of cosmetics, testing of localizability, testing of functionality etc. One of the aspects mentioned is whether all translatables have been externalized from the source code, in other words has the sorting of what has to be translated been made from what should not be translated. The pro of externalisation is that the translator knows what to translate; the con is that a lot of text appears without context with ensuing dehumanizing of the translation process and imminent error possibilities – problems that Esselink does not comment on in the chapter.

Chapter six *Online Help Translation* has been given its own chapter, probably because,

Online help is the largest translation component of most localisation projects. (Esselink 2000: 165)

This should be the only reason as many of the problems dealt with here are also dealt with in other places in the book. However, as a guide and again from a practical point of view, it might be handy to put it together in one chapter. Anyway, useful information is given on popups and jumps, on hotkeys etc.

Chapters seven *Online Help Engineering and Testing* and eight *Documentation Translation* offer basically the same information as Esselink has already been through in some of the previous chapters. The fact that it is written as a

guide book might explain this, and it should be mentioned that throughout the guide, references are made to different tools that can be used especially for testing a certain part of a computer program.

Chapter nine *Desktop Publishing* elaborates on one of the post-translation features of localisation, viz. on how the texts are set up in the end versions of the programs in the different versions, and what has to be done specifically in this process. The importance of adherence to style sheets, for example, is mentioned as is the general problem of text expansion from the original to the translated version.

Chapter 10 *Graphics Localisation* is one of the very short chapters dealing with generic graphics, screen captures, screen captures with translatable text, and illustrations. It is thought-provoking that since by many definitions the screen is the new physical constraint in all digital respects, and as such also in localized text, so little attention has been given to this aspect in the 2000 edition. Esselink (2003) has paid more attention to the screen. It is thus mentioned that,

The number of printed documents included in software applications has gone down drastically over the past years. (Esselink 2003: 73)

A subheading that supports this trend is *World Wide Web*, which is devoted mainly to the implications of marketing material and localisation of marketing material on the internet. Esselink thus states that,

Most web sites contain a combination of marketing text, product information, and support information. Web sites can be static sites, with collections of HTML files, or dynamic sites, where information is stored in databases and XML or ASP pages are created on the fly with the appropriate text and images. (Esselink 2003: 74)

Chapter 11 is called *Translation Technology*. It basically deals with CAT, computer-aided translation, which is defined as,

In addition to CAT tools, which include translation memory, terminology, and software localisation tools, some companies also use machine translation and dedicated word counting tools on projects. (Esselink 2000: 359)

First of all, a typology is made of existing CAT tools, how a specific tool is chosen, what tools are available, etc. Esselink also notes a trend where many localisation vendors add custom features and enhancements to already existing tools, and also that a localisation vendor does not necessarily restrict himself to one translation tool.

This is a fact that many translation/localisation agencies is not too happy about. Not only are there already reductions in price for reuse of terminology and strings, reuse of older versions etc., but also a requirement on the part of the

localisation vendor that the translation agencies have to buy, use and maintain upgraded versions of different tools. Moreover, as Esselink states, some of the localisation vendors have developed proprietary tools, which they may prefer to use. A count of the different CAT tools available, as listed in the book, results in five commonly used tools, Trados, Star Transit, Déjà Vu, SDLX and IBM TranslationManager. Further less prominent tools are listed, among them also some of the proprietary tools. A feature, which is important today, is whether a system has a terminology lookup feature and integrated terminology management utilities. (Esselink 2000: 359-396)

Other tools have gained ground after the millennium change: Alchemy Catalyst, Passolo, RC-WinTrans which are basically used to translate software resource files into .dll or .exe files; and Doc-to-help, which is used for conversion of online help information into online or printed documentation. (Esselink 2003: 73-74)

These factors provoke another thought. What do the above CAT factors mean to translation and the translation industry? Clearly, the entry barrier to localisation is already fairly high. If specialized knowledge is taken into account, along with the reduction of pay in general, and reductions in pay for reuse of old versions and reuse of texts strings, combined with the requirements from the vendors that the translators and translation agencies have to invest in specialized software and updates thereof to be in the market, then we face a translation/localisation market that has already changed and will further dramatically change the localisation scene.

The chapter further encompasses a discussion of software localisation tools (to help translators localize software user interfaces), machine translation tools (tools to help a machine perform the translation) and word counting tools (to be used in the billing procedure between translator and software vendor).

In chapter 12 *Terminology*, the Introduction commences with the following statement,

Terminology management is a frequently underestimated task in localisation projects. (Esselink 2000: 397)

Esselink himself has devoted a mere 15 pages to the subject, divided on the topics of terminology setup, terminology reference materials, terminology standards, and creating user interface glossaries. The references include three books. This is apparently not Esselink's major interest. To be fair, Esselink does not write about terminology management as the overall theme, nor does he claim to be an expert within this field. What he does write in this chapter, which is not found in the books and articles on terminology management that I have seen, is a listing of the industry's different resources in this respect. This information might come in handy some day.

Later Esselink (2003) expresses a slightly different view, which might explain why he sees terminology management as an underestimated task,

In localisation, terminology management is usually done in a very basic manner. Localisers typically do not create or use large multilingual terminology databases with term definitions, context, grammatical information, source, etc. [...] Instead, in most cases only bilingual glossaries of translated terms or phrases are used [...]. (Esselink 2003: 81)

The two appendices consist of a glossary of terms and an article Localization in the New Millennium, which is an edited version of an article published in Language International Magazine, in December 1999, entitled The End of Translation as We Know It.

Although Esselink's book is now 5 years old, and although much has happened in the localisation industry since then, it is still a major resource to draw on in practice and for learning. Hopefully, a new and revised edition will soon be in the printing press. The book chapter from 2003 adds information on trends that will spread the concept of localisation to new areas.

## **5. General comments**

It may not come as a surprise by now that it is pure logic that Esselink's book title includes the word guide whereas Pym's book title does not reveal whether it was intended to be a textbook for education or a book to be read by broader circles in industry, academia and political life. Each of the books will separately be fine in translation and localisation education - however, combined they complement each other with the academic, evaluating approach on the one hand, and the pragmatic, hands-on approach on the other hand, supplemented by a vision of how the localisation industry will develop.

Where Esselink stands out with a very matter-of-fact attitude to what translation and localisation are heading towards, but with a lack of evaluation and no concern for the consequences for translators, software engineers, other localisation contributors and consumers in relation to the development, Pym tears out bits and pieces of development and shows examples of the complex, globalized world and its contents and discontents when it comes to such trivialities as what is translated and adapted and what not and for what reasons. For instance in Pym's example with the State of Kuwait announcement, which was interesting with its complexity of language mix and function in a global market, but also accompanied with a style that stands out as literary rather than non-literary: "Holed up in a cheap hotel in Madrid, little to read save a newspaper from the flight, we allowed our insomniac eyes to stray across *Le Monde*." (Pym 2004: 6) At this point in the book, which was fairly early, there were lingering doubts about the seriousness of the book. Although the book was maybe not intended

as a textbook, it was probably not intended as a narrative, either. Later on, this blending of styles was shelved, and interesting and challenging topics emerged through the lines.

Esselink is already a standard piece of equipment on the desk in many localisation classes today, and Pym's book definitely deserves a place there, too. Their combination of theory and practice serves as a good starting point for localisation. What can be hard in the classroom is the feel for the very central aspect in both books: that of distribution. Theoretical case studies might come in handy here as might exercises with project and process management alongside the localisation and translation studies.

## 6. Conclusion

In the house of localisation, Esselink and Pym have a carpet for a floor, but the carpet design varies considerably. The patterns can be fitted together with some effort, but are not congruent. Where Esselink's carpet is filigreed, and the details can be studied with a magnifying glass and give much information and hints to how things can be done, but with no bird's perspective, Pym's carpet is thought-provoking in its pattern and gives a good overview of the whole carpet, but the use of the magnifying glass does not add further details to the pattern. A solution for a reader or student of localisation would be to carpet two adjacent rooms, one with Esselink, another with Pym, and then move back and forth between them, which is what any person who has to get insight in a new field has to do. Let's dub Pym's room 'a room with an overview', and Esselink's room 'a room for absorption.'

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